Golden Sierra Life Skills

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FIRST 5 COMMISSIONS - LEARNING CONVERSATION

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M.I.C. (Men, Infant, and Children) PROGRAM Final Report for Funding Cycle 2003 -2004 Preliminary Report for Funding Cycle 2004 - 2005 Final Report for Funding Cycle 2003 -2004

Golden Sierra Life Skills has provided services for eleven (11) fathers/father figures from the time period of April to June of 2004.

These fathers/father figures have a total of eleven (11) children, between the ages of 0-5 years, whose lives are impacted by these eleven (11) men. Five (5) of these children were male and five (5) were female.

All of the children in this screening session were Caucasian with no ethnic identification.

The scope of work is to address the following issues:

- Fathers and Father Figures become more knowledgeable in child nurturing, child interacting, parenting, and use these skills to promote their child's appropriate development.
- Financial sustainability for the M.I.C. Program independent of First 5 funding.

Adult Screens

In looking at the Outcome Tracker data for the MIC Program Adult Screens I feel that the following indicators are important to the outcome goals.

1. Indicator # 4 – Happy with life and experiencing positive selfattitude.

Many of the men that come to this program are at a crossroads in their lives. They are unhappy, depressed, engaged in risk behaviors, have little or no regard for anyone else but themselves. By attending the MIC classes the men not only learn of their positive self worth but when they become positive about themselves they bring a positive nurturing interaction with their child interacting.

2. Indicator # 5 – Free of illicit drugs or alcohol.

Some of the men in this session had drug/alcohol issues. Some of them were referred by the judicial system. By attending the MIC classes the men that were dealing with these issues obtained the support of the other men in the class. They got referrals to NA and/or AA programs. I can not say for sure, but it is my belief that it takes a great deal of support to address this risk behavior and the MIC program is a non-judgmental peer support system that helps to reinforce individual treatment programs and the Judicial system to help men deal with these issues. How does this address our scope of work? Can a broken man be a positive role model for his children if he can't take care of himself? No. When the Fathers and Father Figures free themselves of drugs and alcohol children gain a parent that is focused on their care, nurturing and development and they are in a safe environment.

3. Indicator # 15 – Obeying all Laws.

The fact that Fathers and Father Figures had at risk behaviors places their children at risk. When the Fathers and Father Figures address their risk behaviors they become more knowledgeable about what impacts their children's lives. Again, with the peer support of the class the outcome is children living in a safer environment.

4. Indicator # 16 – Engaged in self-controlled, positive, non-violent behavior.

Fathers and Father figures received instruction in conflict resolution, communication skills, healthy families, anger management and toxic parenting. When the men learned the damage that these risk behaviors cause to their children's development we saw an improvement in this area. Again, I feel that this is significant because it improves the environment that the children are living in. Thus, the parent becomes more effective in communication with not only the other parent but their child also.

5. Indicator # 20 – Self-sufficient/supporting self and/or family.

Fathers and Father figures receive instruction in child support issues, and budgeting. After obtaining information and support of peers the men in the classes learn that being an effective parent means more that just showing up with presents on birthdays and holidays. It means child support and seeing that all the needs of the child are addressed. I believe the instruction that M.I.C. Program has given these men has been successful because one of the fathers voluntarily signed up with the District Attorney's Office Child Support Division.

Educational Class Evaluation

Out of the eleven (11) men that attended the classes five (5) of them filled out a class evaluation sheet.

Several of the men that participated in the class identified their lack of skills and knowledge and identified their own risk behaviors.

The men expanded on the fact that they were unaware of the negative impact of their behaviors on their children. They also addressed the issue of investing more time with their children and doing more hands on activities with their children.

The men all felt that their relationship was improved after the class. All the men that filled out the evaluations expressed gaining skills and knowledge that has assisted in bring them closer to their children, assisted with co-parenting skills, the importance of positive male parenting in a child's life and the serious impact that a father has on a child's life.

Conclusion

By the data collected on the outcome screenings and the class evaluation sheets we see that fathers and father figures benefit in obtaining the skills and knowledge to improve their lives and by doing so become educated on the needs of their children and what they must do to improve the lives of their children.

Children Screens

In looking at the Outcome Tracker data for the MIC Program Early Childhood Screens I feel that the following indicators are important to the outcome goals.

1. Indicator # 17 – Participating in a formal or informal support network for the family.

This indicator shows that when fathers and father figures obtain support they become more knowledgeable and acquire the skills needed to become more effective parents and can better address the needs of their children. Often fathers and father figures need more than one support or educational system. The MIC program offers not only an education program but peer support/education. Additionally the MIC program works in conjunction with outside agencies and reinforces the support the efforts of those agencies.

2. Indicator # 18 – Experiencing a positive relationship with the child.

This indicator shows that after fathers and father figures become educated with information on pre and post natal care, toxic parenting, one on one child care, nutrition, communication skills, and dangers of smoking with children and how anger and domestic violence impacts children they obtain new parenting skills and develop a positive, nurturing relationship with their children. The use of these new skills can do nothing else but promote their child's development in a positive way.

3. Indicator # 19 — Engaged in positive parenting and child development practices.

I believe that this indicator in important because it shows that the fathers and father figures are applying their new skills when they leave the class. In some of the fathers and father figures the skills are new and continue to need reinforcement but after completion of the class they have a foundation to build from and continue to fine tune their parenting skills and become more effective parents who are equipped to deal with the demands of society and fatherhood.

Conclusion

In conclusion the screens, in general, don't change very much. The areas that show significant change are in the area of Parent/Caregiver. I believe that this is true due to the changes in the fathers and father figures. The data presented on the children is reported by the fathers and father figures. MIC is a men's program that is designed to improve and educate men thus improving the lives of their children.

Financial sustainability for the M.I.C. Program independent of First 5 funding.

MIC continues to give Program presentations to outside referral agencies in attempts to obtain referrals of fathers and father figures with children over 5 and obtain commitment from outside agencies for reimbursement.

Additionally, we use a sliding fee scale for fathers and father figures with children over 5 years of age who are able to pay themselves.

Golden Sierra Life Skills is also continuing to develop partnerships with outside agencies to develop additional referral sources. Our newest partner is **March of Dimes**. Recently Golden Sierra Life Skills was invited to address a conference of men's programs from all over the State of California and give them information about our successful program and what Placer County First 5 Commission is doing to assist in the education of fathers and father figures to improve the lives of their children.

Golden Sierra Life Skills is also committed to investigating new funding sources for the program to decrease dependency on the First 5 Commission.

New Funding Cycle

We have five (5) new screenings from July 1, 2004 to now and new screenings pending for the Tahoe/Kings Beach area that we have not received. We have the screenings available for review but we feel that there is not enough data collected to make any determinations and respectfully request to present these at the next learning conversation.